

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 1973ff through 1973ff-6, 39 U.S.C. 3406, and 18 U.S.C. 608-609)

This law consolidates and supersedes the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955 and the Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1975. It applies to **all general, primary, and special elections for federal office in all jurisdictions** and

Absentee Voting for Military

- Permits members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their spouses and dependents, to register and vote absentee in elections for federal offices.

Absentee Voting for Overseas Citizens

- Permits civilian U.S. citizens residing abroad, who may no longer maintain a residence in the United States, to register and vote absentee in federal elections in the jurisdiction (or precinct) of their last residence in the United States.

The FPCA

- Provides for voter registration and application for an absentee ballot by mail using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) form for members of the military (as well as their spouses and dependents) and for overseas citizens.

Registration for Military and Overseas Citizens

- Requires the acceptance of any valid voter registration application for federal elections from absent uniformed or overseas voters and their qualified dependents if received at least 30 days before the election (or a lesser period if State law permits).

The (Blank) Federal Write-In Ballot

- Permits voters in the Uniformed Services (including their spouses and dependents) and citizens residing outside the United States who are **absent** from the United States and its territories to cast a federal write-in ballot (or so-called "blank ballot") in **general elections for federal offices** *provided*:
 - ☐ the voter has complied with the State's legal requirements concerning absentee voting (in such matters as registration, notarization, etc.),
 - ☐ the voter has made a timely request for a regular absentee ballot ("timely" being defined as having been received by the local election official at least 30 days before the election),
 - ☐ the voter has not received the regular absentee ballot in time to vote and return it (this decision is left largely to the voter), and
 - ☐ the ballot is submitted from a location outside the United States or its territories.

(NOTES: (1) Blank ballots are obtained by voters from U.S. embassies, consulates, or military installations. (2) Should the voter cast a blank ballot but then receive, vote, and return the regular absentee ballot on time, the regular ballot takes precedence over the blank ballot.)

- Recommends that the States take action to eliminate obstacles to absentee voting encountered by military and overseas citizens.
- Recommends that, if an application other than the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is required for absentee registration, it should be sent to the voter along with the absentee ballot, to be returned with the ballot.
- Encourages the provision of late registration for persons recently separated from the Armed Forces.
- Prohibits persons from furnishing false information to establish eligibility to vote under this Act.

For further information regarding any of the provisions of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (or for assistance in providing election services to uniformed or overseas citizens) contact:

The Federal Voting Assistance Program
Pentagon Rm 1B-457
Washington, DC 20301
Tele: 703/695-0663
FAX: 703/693-5507